

Florida

Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® (FCAT)*

*This exam is undergoing significant changes. The data here reflects the FCAT, which will be replaced by the FCAT 2.0 and Florida End-of-Course Assessments beginning with the 2010-11 school year.

Part I: Policy Trends

Type of test	Comprehensive standards-based exam
Purpose	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum • Encourage districts and schools to identify and serve students at risk of academic failure • Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform educational policy decisions • Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards • Promote equity of opportunity across all student groups • Meet a state mandate
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2007-08 school year or any pending changes for the upcoming school year.	<p>Beginning with the 2010-11 school year, the statewide assessment program will begin transitioning to assessing student understanding of the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards through the implementation of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test® 2.0 (FCAT 2.0) and Florida End-of-Course (EOC) Assessments. Selected grades and subjects will continue to participate in FCAT assessments until the final transition is complete. The proposed schedule for this transition is posted at http://www.fl DOE.org/asp/k12memo/pdf/tngcbtf.pdf and guided by the requirements of SB4, passed during the 2010 legislative session (see: http://laws.flrules.org/files/Ch_2010-022.pdf). While Florida will begin the transition this year, Florida's 2011 graduates remain under the current system as reported in this survey.</p>
Status of state's decision regarding the Common Core State Standards and impact of that decision on exit exam policies	<p>Florida high school assessments will be updated to address Florida's Next Generation Sunshine State Standards (Common Core) in the areas of English/language arts and mathematics in 2014-15.</p>
Test used by colleges or	Students who do not receive a diploma because they have

universities for undergraduate admission?	<p>not passed the FCAT can be admitted to limited non-degree programs and GED preparation courses in a community college.</p> <p>Students who do not pass the FCAT and who receive a certificate of completion rather than a standard high school diploma may enroll in community college Associate degree programs, except for those Associate degree programs that have specific occupational licensing requirements that include a standard high school diploma.</p>
Year first administered	1998
Year diplomas first withheld	2003
Subjects tested	Reading and mathematics
Types of questions	Questions include multiple-choice and gridded-response.
Grade first administered	10 th
Grade(s) exam aligned to	10 th
Number of retakes allowed before end of grade 12	Four, with the first retake opportunity in October of 11 th grade.
Retakes after grade 12	Students who have not passed the FCAT but have met other graduation requirements may retake the exam after 12 th grade and still receive a standard diploma. There are no limits on the number of retakes or the age for retaking the exam.
Does the state have reciprocity with other states?	No. However, a new student who enters the Florida public school system in grade 12 may use an approved subject-area concordant score (on the ACT or SAT) to fulfill the graduation requirement in lieu of the exit exam.
Exit exam used for No Child Left Behind?	<p>Yes. Results from the first test administration in 10th grade are used to meet NCLB requirements.</p> <p>Florida will begin “banking” student scores on the Algebra 1 EOC Assessment for future use in NCLB adequate yearly progress (AYP) calculations.</p>
Same cut score for graduation	No. The FCAT reading and mathematics passing scores for

and NCLB?	<p>graduation are lower (in the mid-range of the Level 2 or “basic” score) than those used for NCLB purposes (Level 3).</p> <p>Cut scores for the new EOC assessments have not been determined at this time.</p>
Has the state considered changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes?	<p>Florida will establish new cut scores for high school graduation with the implementation of the FCAT 2.0 and new EOC assessments.</p>
Evaluations of state exit exam	<p>Florida was included in the Achieve, Inc., study, <i>Do Graduation Tests Measure Up? A Closer Look at State High School Exit Exams</i> (June 2004), available at www.achieve.org</p>
State test contractor	<p>NCS Pearson, Inc.; same contractor for new EOC assessments</p>
Does the state provide students with alternate paths to graduation?	<p>Yes. Criteria for alternate paths to graduation are prescribed in Florida law. Sections 1003.428(4)(b) and 1008.22(10), Florida Statutes (F.S.), provide for the use of concordant scores from “widely used high school achievement tests” (e.g., PSAT, PLAN, ACT, SAT, CPT) in lieu of FCAT scores to satisfy Florida’s graduation test requirements in reading and math. The state department of education identifies concordant scores on applicable examinations for this purpose.</p> <p>Section 1003.43(11)(b), F.S., provides for waiving the FCAT graduation requirement for a student with a disability if other specified criteria are met. (Students who do not meet the exit exam requirement may be awarded a certificate of completion instead of a diploma or may be awarded a State of Florida diploma by passing the GED. These students do not receive a standard high school diploma.)</p> <p>HB 7183 establishes that students in the GED Exit Option program, who earn their diplomas by passing both sections of the FCAT or the ACT or SAT and the GED test, will receive a Florida high school equivalency diploma instead of the “standard” diploma.</p> <p>Of the 162,113 diploma graduates in 2008-09, including all students, approximately 6.48%, or 10,497 students, satisfied the graduation test requirement through an alternative</p>

assessment (ACT/SAT).

Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners

No. However, English language learners (ELLs) may use the alternative score options available to general education students.

Accommodations for ELLs are provided, including those classified under flexible setting, flexible scheduling, additional time, and assistance in their heritage language.

Of the 3,854 diploma graduates in 2008-09 classified as ELLs, approximately 39.7%, or 1,529 students, satisfied the graduation test requirement through an alternative assessment (ACT/SAT).

Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities

Yes. The FCAT/EOC assessment requirement may be waived for students with disabilities who have not achieved a passing score on the exam after two attempts and have met all other requirements to graduate with a standard diploma.

Accommodations for students with disabilities are provided, including those classified under presentation, responding, and scheduling. Requests for unique accommodations are reviewed upon request.

In 2009-10, 2,956 students with disabilities graduated with an FCAT waiver. These students represent 24.7% of students with disabilities receiving a standard diploma and 16.7% of students with disabilities completing school in 2009-10.

Who makes decisions on whether a student is eligible to use alternate paths?

Florida laws and State Board of Education rules specify the conditions under which alternate paths may be used. School districts are responsible for implementing and overseeing the alternate paths.

For students with disabilities, the individualized education program (IEP) team determines if the student is eligible for an FCAT waiver. Eligibility for all other alternatives is specified in state law or rule.

How are students identified as eligible for alternate paths to graduate?

Students with disabilities are identified as eligible for an FCAT waiver through the IEP team process.

When calculating the

Yes, for students receiving certain diploma types [standard

graduation rate for AYP purposes, does the state count students taking alternate paths together with graduates who passed the high school exit exams?

diplomas awarded to students who meet the graduation test requirement through concordant test scores; standard diplomas awarded to students with disabilities who meet the requirement for an FCAT waiver in accordance with s. 1003.43(11)(b), F.S.]. Certain other diploma recipients are not counted as graduates: special diploma recipients and GED-based diploma recipients in adult education programs, with the latter (adult ed. GEDs) not counted in either the numerator or denominator.

How many full-time equivalent staff in the state department of education are involved in implementing alternate paths?

Facilitating the implementation of the alternate paths (FCAT waiver and FCAT concordant scores) does not require a full-time staff member in each respective area. A portion of staff time in areas across the department is dedicated to providing and collecting information in these areas.

Types of assistance the state provides for all districts to raise *initial* pass rates for all students on the high school exit exam

The state offers technical assistance to help:

- Teachers administer the exam, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and train-the-trainer workshops;
- Teachers prepare students for success on the exam, which assesses the important content in the Sunshine State Standards, and includes online assistance for students, specialist(s) in the state education agency, and professional development opportunities;
- Teachers become more proficient in their content area, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Schools identify and target students for assistance, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Schools implement comprehensive school reform, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve formative uses of assessment, which includes online assistance, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to

districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;

- Districts improve professional development for teachers, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance;
- Districts improve the instructional leadership provided by administrators, which includes online assistance, specialist(s) in the state education agency, field-based specialists, train-the-trainer workshops, grants to districts, and fiscal resources to fund local personnel to provide assistance.

The state also provides released tests from prior years and sample test materials for teachers and students for the purpose of familiarizing students with the format of the test items and the organization of the test.

In addition:

- Florida's standards' database includes FCAT test item specifications for each standard assessed, providing teachers information on the alignment between the standards and the assessments as they prepare instruction for students.
- Florida's standards' database also includes the course descriptions for the courses that will be assessed using EOC assessments to help ensure instructional validity.
- Florida's instructional materials adoption process requires instructional materials to include instructional content and student practice materials on all content that is assessed on the EOC assessments to better ensure students receive instruction and practice on the content that is assessed.
- Florida provides a Web-based student tutorial called FCAT Explorer where students can practice and be provided instruction on the specific standards that they need assistance with.
- The FCAT Explorer site also includes mini-assessments on each standard for teachers to use to guide decisions regarding remedial instructional needs.

Types of assistance or remediation the state provides for all districts to help students who have failed to pass the exit exam

The state provides:

- Targeted remediation programs for students
- Additional professional development for teachers in their content area
- Additional professional development for teachers in meeting the specific needs of students at risk of academic failure
- Additional professional development for teachers in the formative uses of assessment
- Additional professional development for administrators

Does the state provide funding for remediation?

Yes. Categorical funds for Supplemental Academic Instruction (SAI) are allocated annually to each school district in the amount provided in the General Appropriations Act. As provided in state law, supplemental instruction strategies financed through SAI funds may include, but are not limited to: modified curriculum, reading instruction, after-school instruction, tutoring, mentoring, class size reduction, extended school year, intensive skills development in summer school, and other methods for improving student achievement.

Are districts mandated by law to provide remediation?

Yes. State law requires school districts to provide remediation to students who do not meet the levels of performance on statewide assessments as defined by the commissioner or who fail to meet performance levels required for promotion consistent with the district school board’s plan for student progression. The school these students are enrolled in must develop a progress monitoring plan designed to assist the students in meeting state and district expectations for proficiency. In addition, the state or district must provide these students with information to help prepare them for future administrations of the test, such as information about remediation requirements, optional remediation opportunities, future test dates, and implications for course taking.

As part of Florida’s State Board of Education approved *Course Code Directory*, intensive reading and mathematics courses are available for districts to enroll students in who require additional instruction to be successful.

Are students required to participate in remediation?

Yes. State law details the requirement for students to receive remediation when they score Level 1 or 2 on the FCAT

reading or mathematics test. The required remediation varies depending on the subject and score.

Part II: Student Performance

Initial pass rates, 2008-09

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10th grade, 2008-09		
Student Group	Reading	Math
All students	57%	81%
White	70%	89%
African American	36%	65%
Latino	50%	77%
Asian	73%	92%
Native American	64%	84%
Multiracial	66%	85%
English language learners	12%	47%
Migrant	31%	68%
Students with disabilities	22%	45%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	42%	72%
Passing score (scale of 100-500)	300	300

Note: Data provided by the state department of education.

Denominator used when calculating these rates: Number of students tested – see <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics/>

Initial pass rates, 2009-10

Percentage of Students Passing on the First Try in 10th grade, 2009-10		
Student Group	Reading	Math
All students	60%	84%
White	71%	91%
African American	36%	69%
Latino	55%	82%
Asian	73%	93%
Native American	60%	87%
Multiracial	65%	87%
English language learners	14%	53%
Migrant	31%	70%
Students with disabilities	24%	50%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	46%	77%
Passing score (scale of 100-500)	300	300

500)

Note: Data provided by the state department of education.

Denominator used when calculating these rates: Number of students tested – see <https://app1.fldoe.org/FCATDemographics/>

Student Group	State Graduation Rates	
	2008-09	2009-10
All students	76%	78%
White	84%	85%
African American	63%	67%
Latino	72%	75%
Asian	88%	90%
Native American	77%	78%
English language learners	57%	60%
Migrant	60%	64%
Students with disabilities	47%	49%
Free or reduced-price lunch eligible	65%	68%

Note: Data were obtained from the state department of education’s Web site at <http://www.fldoe.org/eias/eiaspubs/> on June 3, 2010.

Current state graduation rate calculation formula for AYP purposes.

Florida uses the Adjusted Cohort Rate, defining a legitimate leaver as a student who transfers out of the school to another education program or is deceased. Includes recipients of Exit Option high school equivalency diplomas as graduating students, but does not include recipients of certificates of completion or special diplomas. Students who pursue GEDs are considered transfer students.